

# TREASURY NEWS



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**Remarks by Secretary of Treasury  
James A. Baker, III  
At the Liberty Gold Coin First Striking  
West Point, New York  
October 18, 1985**

I am pleased to be here on behalf of one of the most cherished symbols of America. To strike a coin in the image of the Statue of Liberty is to strike a blow for freedom. It echoes the struggles and triumphs of our past, when millions who "yearned to breathe free" came to the new world.

In the old world, that yearning was called 'America fever.' It swept from village to village, across a continent. It was spread by hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic letters that poured in from relatives and friends who had become Americans.

What was this 'America fever'? It was certainly a powerful affliction that drew so many from so far through such hardship. They summoned their courage and possessions and came across the vast reaches of the ocean.

They -- our own flesh and blood -- came for reasons that still drive our souls today. They came for liberty, for economic opportunity, for a chance to participate in the greatest and most successful experiment in government the world has ever witnessed. As President Reagan summed it up -- "they were captured by the American dream."

Imagine the joy of those courageous voyagers when they first saw the coastline where we now stand. Picture the sun highlighting a torch held high by a shining goddess. She beckons. Hearts leap. The destination is near.

Our duty to our country is to never forget why our ancestors felt such joy. We must always appreciate the liberty that is the strength of America.

Without freedom, despotism and despondency fill the void. Spontaneity and innovation wither and die. Our economy no longer could create millions of jobs and a half million or so new businesses every year.

Without freedom, we are not America.

To reaffirm our belief in freedom, we preserve its symbols. This summer, President Reagan signed the Liberty Coin legislation passed by Congress.

One person today deserves special recognition for his leadership and efforts in making the Liberty coins a reality. Congressman Frank Annunzio, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage, wrote the bill that enables the Treasury Department to mint and issue these coins. He then shepherded the legislation through Congress. We are pleased he could be with us on this important occasion.

As Kay Ortega mentioned, the Liberty coin program not only commemorates the centennial of the Statue of Liberty, but it will play a key role in raising money to restore both the Lady herself and Ellis Island. The proceeds will help the Foundation finish a job to which many individuals and corporations have donated a great amount of time and money.

All Americans, from schoolchildren to grandparents, may buy the Liberty coins and help this vital restoration. They can follow in a tradition which began in the 1880's when individuals in America and France contributed so generously to the building of the statue.

We hope that millions of people will catch 'America fever' once more, and participate in this historic venture. Then our children, and their children, can look back, and say, "you know, way back in the 1980's, Americans joined together to preserve a precious symbol of liberty."

Thank you.